

The bill enhances state and local law enforcement resources to prevent and prosecute hate crimes

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(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Albio Sires voted today to assist local law enforcement in the prosecution and prevention of violent, bias motivated crimes. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act prohibits hate crimes motivated by discrimination. It also broadens federal involvement through legal jurisdiction, provides funding for prevention, and enhances support for local prosecutors. H.R. 1592 focuses on giving state and local law enforcement the tools they need to prevent and prosecute violent hate crimes.

"Freedom of speech is one thing, but to cause physical injury is quite another," said Congressman Albio Sires. "Congress must do all it can to prevent the violent hate crimes that not only destroy families, but also permanently scar entire communities with sorrow and painful memories. Proper prosecution and prevention programs will send a stern message to those who might consider violent actions against innocent, unsuspecting victims."

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act prohibits hate crimes motivated by race, religion, color, or national origin, as well as gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. It establishes grants to assist local, state, and tribal officials with hate crimes cases and programs to combat crimes committed by juvenile offenders. This legislation also requires the Federal Bureau of Investigation to include crime statistics on gender and gender identity related bias crimes, as well as juvenile victims and offenders.

"The sooner we properly acknowledge and document the existence of violent hate crimes, the sooner we can focus on preventing them. Violence and discrimination, especially based on a person's race, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation, casts a shadow of hate on our society. We must adequately prosecute and enforce the laws that protect vulnerable Americans and continue working towards education and tolerance," said Congressman Sires.